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Prof. of Geography
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For Prof. Philip Hager
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Saint Augustine and Haeckel

1-10-02, 10-1-02

EPITOME OF HAECKEL'S "WORLD RIDDLES"

Attenuated jelly fills dimension's every place
Nor cold nor warm nor palpable it coexists with space.—
A thrill of condensation, and the atoms first exist.
They tend to go on shrinking, and this protyle to resist.
Thus force results and shows itself by radiance and motion;
The atoms draw together forming islets in the ocean;
The strain increases, heat ensues, the temp'rature's appalling,
The universe is flecked with matter boiling, bursting, falling,
When, following a partial truce, both halogen and metal
The calmer realms of mighty space in loving couples settle.
Still it was hot, and none but pyrogenic families flourished;
Volcanoes were the mother's breasts that baby crystals nourished.
Some million cycles went their way, the angry clouds were riven
And other, cooler, loving pairs appeared and were forgiven.
First Carbon, with a harem such as only chemists know,
Began his endless offspring; followed soon by H_2O
Which floated from the lowering clouds that owed to it their birth,
Continuing the action till it decked two-thirds of earth;
Yet ere the earliest water from its latent heat had parted
Had Carbon, the Lothario, extensive families started.
Anhydrous carbonates, so-called, with beauty soft and placid,
Always prepared to fill a gap or yield carbonic acid.
Our globe, the merest accident now put a different garb on:
To wit, a drop of water fell upon a hydro-carbon.
The latter liked it, swelled apace, and having passed the spasm,
Just multiplied by fission,—and behold our protoplasm!
Hence rose a progeny which needs ten thousand books to treat them
Of Plasmodomous cells, and groups of Plasmophags to eat them—
These *Protozoa* (single cells) improved their opportunities
By independent union in *Coenobian* communities.
They congregated closely but without connective tissue.
By fission, spores, gemmation, were produced their further issue.
Metazoic federation, next, the simple cells annexes,
And swaddles them in tissue, and divides them into sexes.
The *Gastrula* with double layers evolves in time, but slowly;
The bloodless *Coelentaria* of course are the more lowly.
The *Coelomaria* have blood, and cavities, and so forth,
And from these federated cells man's ancestors now go forth.
A little ball and nucleus of membraned protoplasm
By vastly various products spans the whole biotic chasm.
The "ego" of the dog or man as *Cytula* is started,
Two cells and nuclei coalesced with parents traits imparted.
Not only frame but soul results, a life becomes reality
Till cellular secession and its consequent mortality.

The path through earliest forms of life cannot be always threaded.
For plastic cells in solid rock can seldom be imbedded.
So that the first beginnings of incipient zoölogy
Are reasoned by analogy from studies in ontology.
Yet, from the close agreement of the embryonic stages
With the order of succession during geologic ages,
Analogy provides us with sufficient facts to go on
In naming as our Adam a Laurentian *Protozoön*
Which, then, through worms and mollusks in a constant progress rises
Up to the stage of vertebrates—the end of all surmises.

The time was scarce Devonian when our predecessors' wishes
 Were gratified by reaching this exalted state—as fishes.
 Promotion followed slowly: first amphibian tails and claws,
 Then Permian *Reptilia* with poison in their jaws.
 Still higher rose our parent stock to realize our dreams
 Ambitious to be Mammals they commenced as *Monotremes*.
 But this was not sufficient, and at quarter past Jurassic
 They grew to be *Marsupials* and made that structure classic.
 The hour was scarce Cretaceous when from mammals elemental
 They took the next degree above and budded out placental.
 Nor here did effort sleep, as once the handsome youth Endymion,
 But upward through Lemurian shapes they reached the form pro-simian.
 As Primates *Catarrhinae*, *Cynopithec*i, were passed;
Pithecanthropus alalus then, and speaking man at last.

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So much for our material frame, and is it then the whole,
 Or is there left to study the department of the soul,
 An immaterial something with our bodies but a span
 Surviving as the "ego" the decaying trunk of man?
 How this which was created in the blastodermic sphere
 Can fail to share its body's death is anything but clear.
 In sound and healthy bodies its capacities are best,
 Weak when the body weakens, vanished when it's laid to rest.
 So close is the connection of the soul and its receptacle
 That claims of life hereafter make unbiassed thinkers sceptical.
 The difference of mind and soul, whatever be our leaning,
 Is difficult to formulate in words of simple meaning.
 More difficult, if creatures of environment are we,
 It is for us to deem our wills in any manner free.

The laws of substance and of force, when all is said and done,
 Are merely paraphrases, and in point of fact are one
 We see but one, embodying all the so-called Nature's laws
 To feeble human intellect the First and Only Cause.
 That law of substance, force, and soul, desire, adaptation
 Which marks the fittest to survive, the rest to transformation.
 Harmonious with surroundings must be that which would not die
 And better fitted things with raw material supply.

And what are the conclusions we are authorized to draw?
 That Force, and Matter, Mind, and Soul, but illustrate one law.
 And is our state the final one, or shall we further fare,
 No longer masticating food; no longer growing hair?
 And shall we win the mastery over every Cosmic might?
 And are we mere Automata? Is nothing wrong or right?
 Is then no God Almighty stretching out His hand to save?
 Is there no hope of heaven waiting us beyond the grave?
 So asks Philosophy athanastist and dualistic
 And thus replies that other one entitled the Monistic
 "All things, all thoughts, all beings, every action which is done,
 "Are but the different forms of THE EXISTENCE, which is ONE."

The noble St. Augustine spoke a creed akin to this,
 The Pantheistic shibboleth; that "GOD IS THAT WHICH IS."
 The Monist leader Haeckel's view is similarly broad,
 He turns the sentence merely, holding—ALL THAT IS IS GOD.

PERSIFOR FRAZER, April 1902.

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(Translation)

ZOOLOGISCHES INSTITUT
DER UNIVERSITÄT JENA

JENA, 4. 4. 1902.

Most honored Friend and Colleague !

For your pleasant letter of the 13. 3. I give you my heartiest thanks, and not less for the fine poem in which you have so brilliantly glorified my "*Welträthsel*."

Since the English translation of this has been spread in America I have received a large number of friendly, and, in part, inspired, letters of approbation from your Fatherland. This endorsement pleases me especially because I see in it a good sign for the monistic development of the future.

I frequently think with pleasure of our joint voyage through the Black Sea.

Do you remember our visit to the bookstore in Odessa where you asked for my "*Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*" and the bookseller answered in consternation: "Such *frightful books* we do not keep; that would be *poison*!" Of this "*frightful poison*" the tenth edition has now appeared (in 36 years—1868). Besides I am now working very piously and harmlessly on "*The Art Forms of Nature*." I am busy with the last three numbers (Plates 71 to 100).

That you have identified my *Monism* with the *Pantheism* of the holy *St. Augustine* has greatly moved me;—this has already occurred frequently!—I hope that at the feast which will be given in New York on the 23d of April I shall come into the best odor with your religious comrades. Perhaps I shall win in this way a warm nook in "*Heaven*"—it is to be hoped in your vicinity! Give, I beg you, to the "*pious brethren in Christ*" my highest blessing.

With heartiest greetings and best wishes,

Your old

ERNST HAECKEL

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